

Page 2, line 20, change "a head" to --ahead--.

**In the Claims:**

Please cancel claim 6 with prejudice.

Please amend claims 1, 4, 7-9, 12, 13 and add new claim 18 as follows:

1. (Amended) An optical information recording medium comprising information tracks <sup>= grooves</sup> extending in a circumferential direction and spaced from each other in a radial direction by lands, wherein:

a first information track and a second information track are radially adjacent but are radially spaced from each other by a single land;

a first phase pit [encoding information for the first information track] is connected to the second information track and extends radially therefrom toward, but does not reach, the first information track, said first phase pit and said first information track being separated radially by a partition wall; and

said first phase pit and said first information track having substantially equal depths.

4. (Amended) The optical information recording medium as defined in claim 1, wherein a width  $W_p$  of said phase pit, a length  $L_p$  of said phase pit in the circumferential direction, the track pitch  $TP$ , and a spot diameter  $BD$  of a recording/reproducing light beam satisfy the relationship [represented]:

$$1.0 \leq L_p/BD, \text{ and}$$

$$0.5 \leq WP/TP \leq 0.8.$$

7. (Amended) The method of mastering as defined in claim 18 [6],  
wherein the values of said spot diameters BD1 and BD2 of said first and second exposing light beams are respectively fixed to constant values; and  
wherein the distance L between the spots of said first and second exposing light beams is adjusted by changing the incident angle of at least one of said exposing light beams directed to an object lens by use of a light deflection element.

8. (Amended) An optical information recording medium comprising:  
circumferentially extending grooves forming information tracks and phase pits forming circumferentially extending preformat tracks;  
partition walls radially separating adjacent information tracks;  
wherein  
said grooves and phase pits are equally deep; and  
phase pits encoding preformat information for a given information track are radially spaced from the groove forming the given information track by partition walls.

9. (Amended) The optical information recording medium as defined in claim 8,  
wherein a width  $\Delta$  of said partition wall in the radial direction and the track pitch TP of  
said information track[,] satisfy the relationship:

$$\Delta / TP \geq 0.1.$$

12. (Amended) The optical information recording medium as defined in claim 8,  
wherein a width Wp of said phase pits, a length Lp of said phase pits in the  
circumferential direction of said information tracks, the track pitch TP of said information tracks,  
and a spot diameter BD of a recording/reproducing light beam satisfy the relationship:

$$1.0 \leq Lp/BD, \text{ and}$$

$$0.8 \leq WP/TP \leq 0.9.$$

13. (Amended) An optical information recording medium comprising:  
circumferentially extending grooves forming information recording tracks, and phase pits  
encoding preformat information for said tracks;  
wherein phase pits encoding preformat information for a given track are radially spaced  
from that track and separated therefrom by a partition wall [be] and are connected  
to an adjacent track; and  
wherein said grooves and phase pits are equally deep.

--18. (New) A method of mastering an optical information recording medium comprising information tracks extending in a circumferential direction and spaced from each other in a radial direction by lands, comprising:

exposing a master to a first exposing light beam for forming a first information track and a second information track that are radially adjacent but are radially spaced from each other by a single land;

exposing said master to a second exposing light beam for forming a first phase pit encoding information for the first information track, said first phase pit being connected to the second information track and extending radially therefrom toward, but not reaching, the first information track, said first phase pit and said first information track being separated radially by a partition wall, and said first phase pit and said first information track having substantially equal depths;

wherein, when a spot diameter of said first exposing light beam is BD1, a spot diameter of said second exposing light beam is BD2, a distance between said first and second exposing light beams is L, and the width of said partition wall in the radial direction is  $\Delta$ , the values of BD1, BD2, L, and  $\Delta$  satisfy the relationship:

$$\Delta = L - (BD1/2) + (BD2/2).--$$